

Galloway Raccoon Confirmed as Third Rabies Case

A raccoon collected from the 300 block of N. Leipzig Avenue in Galloway has been positively confirmed as Atlantic County's third case of rabies this year, according to the Atlantic County Division of Public Health, all of which have involved raccoons.

The homeowner's two pet dogs were involved in an altercation with the raccoon on March 9. The raccoon was collected and sent to the state lab for testing where it was confirmed positive on March 11. Both dogs are current on their rabies vaccinations but each received a booster vaccination as an added precaution. The homeowner may have also been exposed to infected saliva and has been directed to contact a physician for post-exposure treatment.

Rabies is a viral disease that can be fatal if left untreated. Atlantic County reported eight rabies cases in 2015 among bats, skunks, raccoons and a fox. Pet owners are advised to protect their pets with a rabies vaccination.

The Atlantic County Animal Shelter provides free rabies vaccination clinics for dogs and cats one Sunday a month at 240 Old Turnpike Road in Pleasantville. Dogs must be brought on leashes and cats in carriers. For more information call (609) 485-2345 or visit www.aclink.org/animalshelter.

Dogs and cats who receive an initial rabies vaccination are not considered immunized until 28 days after the vaccine has been administered, therefore it is strongly recommended that any animal newly vaccinated or those too young to receive the vaccine (less than three months) not be left outdoors unattended. Situations have arisen where pet owners have left unvaccinated or newly vaccinated pets outdoors where they have sustained exposures to known or suspect rabid animals, resulting in euthanasia or six months strict confinement.

Public health officials also advise residents to teach your children to stay away from wild, stray or aggressive animals. Never feed or touch wild animals or try to keep them as pets.

If you are bitten by an animal, wash the wound immediately with soap and water and seek medical attention.

Report all animal bites to the Atlantic County Division of Public Health at 609-645-5971.

For more information about rabies control and precautions to protect your family and your pets, please visit the county Web site at www.aclink.org/publichealth or call 609-645-5971.